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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 0045
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0018
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0445
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
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SUBJECT: 7th Rotation of Mongolian Troops Departs for Iraq

¶1. One hundred Mongolian troops departed today for Iraq, where they will provide force protection at Camp Echo for Polish troops in the Multinational Force. The six month deployment is Mongolia's 7th rotation of troops to Iraq since 2003. The dawn departure ceremony was attended by the Charge, and presided over by the Vice Defense Minister and Deputy Chief of General Staff (note: both the Minister and Chief of Staff are out of the country).

¶2. As well as Iraq, Mongolia's other current or upcoming peacekeeping troop deployments abroad include:

-- Afghanistan: 21 artillery trainers supporting OEF. The sixth deployment since 2003 will begin in mid October. This is the largest deployment; previous deployments have been about a dozen trainers. The deployment length is six months.

-- Sierra Leone: 250 soldiers under UN command, guarding the international war crimes tribunal. The second six month rotation began in July.

-- Belgium, en route to Kosovo: A 32-troop team left two days ago to begin two months of training in Belgium, which will be followed by a three month deployment alongside Belgian soldiers in the NATO peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. This is Mongolia's second deployment to Kosovo; the first deployment of 36 soldiers began a six month rotation in late 2005.

¶3. In addition, the Mongolian military has discussed deploying 100 troops to Afghanistan under Turkish command. At the October 3 ceremony, the acting chief of the Peacekeeping Operations Department in Mongolia's Armed Forces (MAF) told Economic/Political Chief that this was now under consideration for sometime next year. The MAF had proposed a rotation this year, he said, but delays in consideration at the political level in the government had pushed back the possible deployment date.

Goldbeck